

10.27.15

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Are Holiday Work Parties Work?

During the holiday season many employers want to show appreciation to their staff by throwing holiday parties. Employers need to keep in mind there are some issues when hosting a party.

When an employer plans a holiday party the first thing he or she needs to consider is whether this party will be mandatory for employees. If an employee is injured at a recreational activity, such as a holiday party, that employee is covered by New Jersey Workers Compensation **if** an employer compels an employee to participate in an activity that ordinarily would be considered recreational or social in nature. The Supreme Court has held that the employer who insists employees attend renders that activity a work-related task as a matter of law. When an employer requires the employee to attend (indirect or implicit) this creates an employment situation.

Therefore, when planning your party the manner in which you extend the invitation will affect whether this becomes a work related activity for New Jersey Workers Compensation purposes. You should consider the time, place and activities at the event when determining if you want this to be a mandatory activity.

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